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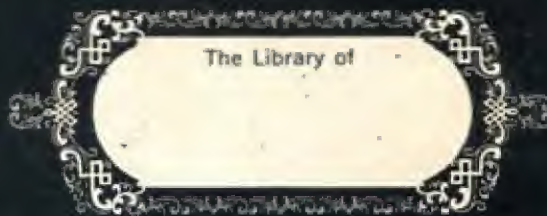
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# SCREEN LEGENDS

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# JAMES DEAN

*His Life and His Legend*

by Gene Ringgold

*Roger LaManna*



"There have been few talents to match that of James Dean's."

—CARROLL BAKER, 1965

Late in the afternoon of September 30, 1955 a silver Porsche sportscar became, simultaneously, an implement of destruction and the springboard for a cinema legend unsurpassed in the history of Hollywood since the death of Rudolph Valentino.

James Dean, the figure about whom this legend revolves, must, in retrospect, be considered both victim and victimizer. Tragically young—only 24—he was destroyed as much by the complexities and the contradictions of his own nature as by the physical impact of collision. The twisted pile of wreckage on Grapevine Road, on the outskirts of Paso Robles, California, was more an effect than a cause.

"His behavior and personality," stated Lee Strasberg of the Actors Studio in New York, "seemed to be part of a pattern which invariably had to lead to







**EAST OF EDEN**, Elia Kazan's masterpiece, catapulted Jimmy to international fame. (Right) is a tender scene with Julie Harris. (Opposite page) a dramatic moment with Albert Dekker.

something destructive. I always had a strange feeling that there was in Jimmy a sort of doomed quality."

This all too heartbreaking ring of prophesy can be attested by his legion of admirers, passionate in their conviction of his genius, who, to this time, still carry him in their hearts and memories as vitally as the day he first invaded their consciousness.

It is difficult to think of a contemporary figure who accomplished so much in so brief a time, and with such fantastic results, as James Dean.

Almost ten years after his death his name retains its original magic. Millions of words have been written about him, thousands of his photographs have been printed and many opinions expressed. Yet a demand for more words, more suppositions and more photographs continues. Every aspect of his life has been investigated, sifted and chronicled from the moment of his birth until the concluding day of his controversial and amazingly creative life; a round-trip comet ride during which he blazed the brightest among the screen constellations.

No one, with even a smattering of ability to appraise, can avoid recognizing the shining and individual nature of his talent and appeal. Nor can anyone of imagination fail to be captured by the bizarre saga of his life wherein a somewhat psychologically unweaned and professionally immature actor, in conflict with his unsteady masculine rhyme, was able to convince the public that he projected a true image of the misunderstood, uncertain of the future, adolescents of his generation. Perceptive persons of experience, particularly in his own profession, were equally aware of what might be called his acting genius if the word genius was not so ephemeral, so impossible of absolute definition. But a genius he was. And heir to the fortunes and follies of that not always enviable estate.

To American youth, ten years after the war destined to end all wars, James Dean epitomized their code: "Live today for there may not be a tomorrow." Dean detractors, affirming "The decline of the West" as a nihilist reality, thought he materialized out of beatnik sand dreams.

One Dean admirer\* recently summed up the feelings of his contemporaries: "James Dean is as much a controversial figure today as he was during his too brief life. He too was a victim of the post war America whose competitive economies and false values transformed people into commodities. He is a twentieth century legend and he was the unquestioned spokesman for the *new* generation who grew up in the shadows of the war dead and a presentiment that

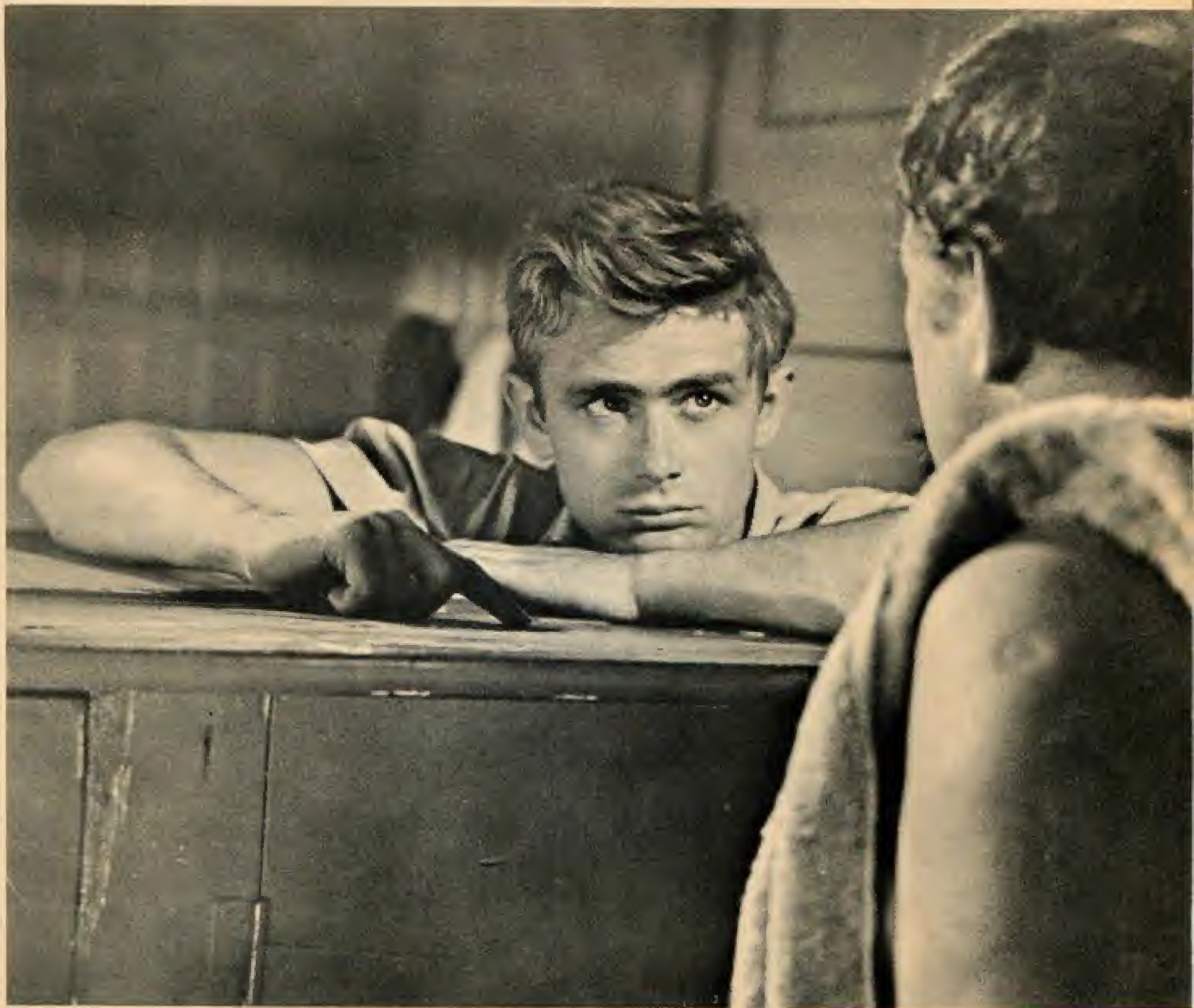


world annihilation, from an atomic war, could happen at any moment. The generation of moral and cultural relativity and rootlessness. The time of the Kerouacs, the hipsters with their capes, tight pants and dark glasses, and the leather jacketed motorcyclists. It was the generation in which many frustrated youths lost their lives, more tragically than James Dean did, in a world of self-exile. It was the generation who made the greatest exodus from the Church and who disdained the belief that the divine faith of mankind is necessary to pursue a higher esthetic culture. The generation which spawned more sadist and masochist perverts, damned to the slavery of their adopted half-world hell, than any period in Christian history.

"James Dean personified the rebels without causes searching for worthwhile identity. And, like the age in

\*David Davenport of San Jose, California.





which he lived, he was restless, rootless and intensely curious about life. He was eager to succeed: eager to 'make it.' People sensed these qualities. They came through. The posthumous hysteria was authentic. The adulation is real. It comes from millions who recognized their own frustrations and understood them better because of Dean's search for his identity."

James Dean's long journey, from his birthplace in a rural American community to being part of the Broadway melee and the main attraction on whom the Hollywood spotlight shone brightly, is rendered more unique by the enigmatic protagonist himself. A young man whose facade never betrayed his true emotions and ambitions which raged in juxtaposed conflict.

James Byron Dean was born February 8, 1931 in one of the flats of the Green Gables, an apartment

building on East 4th Street, in Marion, Indiana.

His mother, Mildred Winslow, was a farmer's daughter who had a great love for poetry and music. Her parents' farm was an enterprising one and family life was such that there was time—and money—for interests outside the bucolic life. After she married and her only child was born, she saw to it that he received musical training and learned to appreciate all the fine arts. The instrument she selected for Jimmy to play was the violin.

Because of his mother's interest in his becoming appreciative of art and music at an early age, Jimmy became somewhat precocious. His cousins and other neighborhood children ridiculed him. Later, when he attended school, he suffered similar harassment.

His father, Winton Dean, a dental technician, worked for the Federal Government. In 1936 he was



assigned to a post, as a permanent staff member, at the Sawtelle Veteran's Administration Hospital in Los Angeles. His wife and son came west with him.

The following year Jimmy enrolled in the Brentwood Public School. He continued with his violin lessons. His teachers remember him as an apt pupil who did not make friends easily. Beside cruel allusions to his music studies, classmates also ridiculed his middle name which his mother habitually coupled with his first name. (Byron was her favorite poet.) School chums also addressed him as "James Byron," rather than calling him "Deanie"—the nickname his father used, but they did not do so with the pride and affection his mother intoned.

Mildred Dean, suffering from a serious cancer infection, was hospitalized in 1939. Her condition de-

clined steadily until her death a few months later. This tragedy so shocked Jimmy that he vowed he would never again play the violin. Years later, interviewed about his early life, he blurted out, somewhat emotionally, "My mother died on me when I was nine years old. What does she expect me to do? Do it all by myself?"

Many believe Jimmy never fully recovered from

A dramatic highlight from EAST OF EDEN (below) when misunderstood Cal Trask (Dean) begs his father (Raymond Massey) for affection. (Opposite page) a rare photo of Jimmy during a reflective moment between scenes of his first starring film.











Jimmy and Julie Harris shared many tender scenes together in EAST OF EDEN and after his death Miss Harris was deluged with letters asking what Jimmy had been like and how she had enjoyed working with him. "I shall never forget him," she said.







In a Salinas bordello, Cal Trask asks the barmaid (Lois Smith) if she knows that her employer is his mother. (Opposite page) a composite of Jimmy, his many moods and faces.



the trauma of his mother's last weeks of agony. And Winton Dean, realizing the seriousness of his son's mental anxiety, arranged for the boy to return to Indiana and live with his grandmother and his uncle and aunt, Marcus and Ortense Winslow. Father and son were an omnipresent reminder to each other of their loss.

Life was vibrant on the prosperous Winslow farm. Jimmy became close to his cousin, Joan, and later, after his cousin Mark was born, he became a big brother figure to the youngster. Rural life also made him more outgoing toward others. He was friendlier and displayed more interest in his Fairmount Public School classmates than he had towards his California associates. He emerged from his self-absorption and, as his circle of acquaintances grew and his popularity increased, his school work improved. Within a year he became a straight A honor student and remained one through high school.

On his tenth birthday his guardians presented him with a horse. Included with the gift was a stipulation that he must be responsible for its care and feeding. In addition to learning to ride he also took an active part in school sports and he practiced pole-vaulting until he became the local champion. He was a fast guard on the school's basketball team and an all-around crack athlete.

He also expanded his interest to the school drama department. With some ability, and a great deal of wit, he played the Frankenstein monster in a comedy project, *Goon With the Wind*, which his school presented with much success. This triumph helped him win a school election which made him president of the "Thespian Society." And he became a popular speaker at meetings of the local Women's Temperance Union. He gave dramatic readings on the evils of alcohol but always injected some satire into his spiel. Occasionally he deviated from the club's main concern to lecture







on theatre or poetry.

The Winslows were members of the Quaker Back Creek Friends Church and Jimmy joined that congregation. A Wesleyan minister, Dr. James A. DeWeed, took an interest in him and the minister helped him to activate an extroverted nature.

In his senior high school year, James Dean won the Indiana State title of Champion Debater in the annual Forensic League contest. His recitation of Dickens' *The Madman* was a theatrically effective one. He came on stage screaming his lines and working feverishly toward an even more dramatic conclusion—collapsing on stage in animal frenzy. The school faculty were so impressed that they urged Board of Education members to select him to represent Indiana in a national debating contest to be

held that year in Longmont, Colorado.

One of his teachers, Mrs. Adeline Nall, accompanied him on the trip. Mrs. Nall was against Jimmy reworking his original presentation but she could do nothing with him. The revamped recitation he made in the national contest was too long and a travesty of his originally successful one. He was eliminated from the debate early and was not among the semi-finalists. For years afterward he ascribed a part of his defeat to Mrs. Nall's inability to be more adamant in her refusal to allow him to alter what had once been a prize-winning presentation.

When he graduated from Fairmount High School in 1949, Jimmy was awarded the school's top athlete medal and a prize from the art department. His teachers, recalling he had been a brilliant student,







Burl Ives, Jimmy and Raymond Massey (top) in EAST OF EDEN. In REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE (above and left) Jimmy was a new boy in the neighborhood who is menaced by the gang leader (Corey Allen) and roughed up his mob of delinquents.







all decried his tragic lack of application and his inability to give himself completely to anything he did well.

Winton Dean re-married several years after his first wife's death. Aside from annual vacations and an occasional long holiday he saw little of Jimmy. After his son's high school graduation he became anxious to establish a family unit. He urged Jimmy to come live with him and his step-mother while attending college.

Jimmy entered the Santa Monica City College as a pre-law student in the fall of 1949. It soon became evident that his interest was not in becoming an attorney. And it was evident too that his father's marriage—and years of separation—were insurmountable causes for domestic estrangement. Instead of living with his parents, he shared an apartment with another student.

During school months he was a radio announcer for the college's FM station. And in the summer of 1950 he worked as an athletic instructor for a local military academy.

He did not return to Santa Monica City College that fall but to the University of California where he was accepted as a theatre arts student.

He became room-mates with William Bast, a student with ambitions to become a writer. They shared a Spanish style apartment and worked together at part-time jobs. More than a year after Jimmy's death Bast revealed what some of their life together had been like in a biography, "James Dean."

Bast's book details much of Dean's experiences during his last years but little information about his early life. It does, however, give some insight into his contagious enthusiasm to become an actor and some indications that Dean's vivacious personality had an unpleasant side.

A friend of Bast's, actor James Whitmore, then in the process of organizing an acting class of the mutual instruction theory, met Dean and accepted him into his group. And it was James Whitmore who incited the stimulus necessary to make Dean aware that, more than anything, he wanted to be a good actor. Whitmore felt the boy possessed the ability to learn and the "spark" that is necessary to be a success in that profession. But Jimmy needed to learn the advantages of self-discipline; to apply his efforts and energies whole-heartedly to an art which demands absolute dedication.

In Jimmy's case the "spark" was an intense spirit which attracted people and made them aware of his individuality. To believe him a worthwhile person even though his behavior, his manners and his total

inability to understand human nature—including his own, labeled him as just another dreary non-conformist. However, his extroversion, more acquired than natural—but still beguiling, and his wholly American face presented a disarming portrait of a young man which was fascinating to the beholder. Dean was intriguing enough to make people want to know him—and help him. And in Hollywood that, coupled with a knowledge of the rudiments of acting, can be refined into star material provided the person possessing these qualifications can project them. Because Jimmy could do that, there is evidence that he might have become a star much sooner than he did but for his own frailties.

Part of the tragedy of his shortcomings was a knack of attracting the wrong people as often as the right ones and not being adroit enough to differentiate between foes, phonies and friends. This naivete toward his sycophants subjected him to much criticism and closed doors to some promising opportunities.

Later, when Dean did achieve prominence, much to the consternation of his admirers, he dropped much of his ingratiating facade. Some well known newspaper and magazine writers, who wrote glowing reports of his acting ability, were never exposed to the sunny side of James Dean. During interviews they saw only the confused, not always articulate, youth whose blatant conceit and bad manners negated much of his talent. Occasionally his lack of tact extended to co-workers.

James Bellulah, the son of novelist James Warner Bellulah and one of Jimmy's classmates, was instrumental in getting Dean his first professional acting job. This was being in a two minute commercial, produced by Jerry Fairbanks, in which Jimmy and a group of teenagers—including young Bellulah and actor Nick Adams—extol the pleasures of a popular cola beverage so refreshingly that it must still be one of Joan Crawford's fond memories.

Producer Fairbanks used Jimmy again; to play John the Baptist in a one hour television play, *Hill Number One*. The play, allegorical in concept, concerned the conflict of the Arabs in trying to prevent the Jews from taking over Israel. Jimmy's performance in a good supporting role, was none too effective towards getting him other TV work.

The few radio bits he did get kept him going for a time. Then, he started neglecting his school work and cutting classes in the desperate hope that the next interview would lead to an audition that would turn the tide toward recognition. Finally, he dropped out of school. He never officially resigned from U.C.L.A.





Wrote Bast: "On weekends when he could afford it he went to Tijuana, Mexico to see the bullfights. Bullfighting fascinated him for awhile and he practiced cape movements at home to the accompaniment of appropriate Spanish music."

Jimmy's athletic prowess and his study of the lithe movements of the art of cape technique helped him develop a panther-like walk that made him appear taller. Many close associates often commented about how he gave the illusion of towering above people actually taller than he. The perpetual slouch he later adopted is traceable to his New York days when he started imitating the posture and mannerisms of the Actors Studio brand of discriminating naturalism.

Jimmy felt his inability to get work stemmed from a belief, on the part of producers, that he lacked talent when, actually, there were few jobs to be had. As hopeful leads turned into bitter disappointments he regarded each rejection as a personal affront. For without the occasional praise and the shallow compliments, so necessary to his ego, he lost confidence in himself and the enthusiasm, that tomorrow would be his lucky day, dispelled.

He started keeping late hours and spending his time with a crowd of misfits who were ready to bolster his deflated ego. He became socially involved with a street corner clan of homosexual, would-be actors. Conceited, simple-minded satyrs who believe a midnight pickup to be the key to success. In the group too were poetry spouting beatniks, masochist motorcyclists, experienced hustlers and epicene hopefuls with wounded eyes. All of them were too lazy to work and too dishonest to admit they lacked the stamina, the intelligence and the talent necessary to succeed. These people became Jimmy Dean's counsellors. It took him awhile to realize these mental deficient, suffering the inertia of "moral dry-rot," exist only on a treadmill for nobodies going nowhere.

James Whitmore proved to be one of Dean's champions and he strongly advised him to get away from his parasitic pals and change his tactics if he still hoped to work at being an actor. Later, Jimmy said of Whitmore, "I owe a lot to him. I guess you can say he saved me when I got all mixed up. He told me I didn't know the difference between acting as a soft job and acting as a difficult art. I needed to learn these differences."

Bill Bast helped him too. It was Bast who got him the job interview which led to his being hired as an usher at the C.B.S. studio in Hollywood. And, through Bast, Jimmy met Rogers Brackett, a radio director, who put him wise to the ways of obtaining bit parts in movies.



Jimmy made his screen debut as an eager gob in the Dean Martin-Jerry Lewis comedy *Sailor Beware*. He had three lines of dialogue which disappeared from the film by the time it was released. He's merely one of a group of sailors in a few background scenes. In his next film, Samuel Fuller's *Fixed Bayonets*, he had another background bit as a battle weary G.I. fighting in Korea. Later he worked as an extra for three days in John Wayne's *Trouble Along the Way*, made at Warner Brothers' studio.

Between such "film assignments" he continued ushering at C.B.S. where, occasionally, he earned overtime pay by doubling as a parking lot attendant. Rogers Brackett also used him for a few radio bits. He later had five days work at Universal-International playing a teenager with an appetite for fancy ice cream concoctions in a Technicolor comedy, *Has Anybody Seen My Gal?*, starring Rock Hudson and Piper Laurie. This bit did escape the editor's shears and Jimmy, if not outstanding, is at least recognizable for a minute or so in a scene with Charles Coburn.

Films, he concluded, offered fewer opportunities for work than television so he decided to go to New York and earnestly try to break into that medium. James Whitmore sanctioned this decision.

"New York overwhelmed me," said Jimmy. "For the first few weeks I was so confused that I strayed only a couple of blocks from my hotel off Times Square. I would see three movies a day in an attempt to escape from my loneliness and depression. I spent \$150 of my limited funds just on seeing movies." And, when the funds were gone, he went to work—as a bus-boy or counterman—in drug stores and various restaurants in the midtown Manhattan theatre district.

It was through Rogers Brackett that he finally did get into television. Brackett had given him a letter of introduction to James Sheldon, one of the directors who worked on the *Robert Montgomery Presents* program. Sheldon, impressed with the boy's clean-cut good looks and his audition, had no work for him but he took the trouble to personally introduce him to talent agent Jane Deacy who worked in Louis Shurr's office.

Miss Deacy sensed Jimmy's potential and she believed that training and seasoning could turn him into a valuable property. The experience he sorely needed, she soon supplied.

His first job was working behind the television cameras. He was hired to be a standby comic for *Beat the Clock*, a comedy show. His function was to act out, for the benefit of program contestants, the

sight gags and comedy material devised for them to perform—supposedly unrehearsed—during the show. Jimmy's natural sense of the absurd—and a willingness to take off his physic brake—made him enjoy these sessions while he did a good job of relieving the nervousness and stage-fright of the participants. Eventually he helped out with studio warm-ups and he became clever at winning audiences before show-time. This ability, many comics claim, is rare and most important to the success of a live radio or TV fun show.

And through Miss Deacy's further efforts Jimmy did face the television cameras; to play bits in stanzas of such weekly series as *T-Men in Action*, *The Web*, *Tales of Tomorrow* and *Martin Kane*. He also had a walk-on part in an early *Studio One* teleplay. None of these assignments were particularly noteworthy but each exposure kept producers and casting agencies aware of him. And Miss Deacy was on hand to remind them her client was ready, reliable and reasonable.

Directors of these tight-budgeted, quickly turned out dramas were less inclined to share Miss Deacy's high opinion of Jimmy's capabilities. Accustomed to working with seasoned performers who delivered a professional reading after a quick study and rehearsal, they did not have the time or the patience to fully explain a characterization or thoroughly work out the performance they wanted from him. Often these men, as inexperienced at directing as Jimmy was at acting, thought his intense determination to fully analyze each small part was more of a nuisance than an asset. His continual interruptions—questions which probed into the psychological mechanism of what made a character tick or suppositions that an author's intentions were not being properly realized were sometimes points well taken but often he was silly, irritating and, occasionally, misinterpreted. Some directors thought Jimmy, who invariably came to work dressed in tight blue jeans and a T-shirt, was not very serious about acting but was intent on ridiculing their own precarious positions. And directors of experience, who did recognize his curiosity as being idealistic dedication, had neither the authority nor the inclination to help teach him any of the refinements of the acting art that was second-nature to them. These well-trained men, appreciating James Dean's possibilities, preferred not having him around to be a painful reminder that they too had once had a dedication to being creative artists but were now merely assembly line technicians. In any case, Jimmy was not a favorite with television directors.

Nor was he an Actors Studio favorite. Much has





People who lives were affected by Jimmy: Elia Kazan, Natalie Wood, Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor, Nick Adams and Pier Angeli, the girl he wanted to marry.

been made of his association with that acting group. Jimmy thought meeting Lee Strasberg, and being permitted to sit in on acting sessions, was one of the most important events of his life. He wrote relatives that he had been accepted as a member of the school and mentioned the expense such training incurred and doubts that he would be able to continue lessons because of it. Strasberg and Elia Kazan claim he was never an Actors Studio pupil. Kazan thought Jimmy helped give the Studio a bad name. "Everyone got the idea that it was a sloppily dressed, don't-give-a-damn kind of group," said Kazan. "This is not so. To begin with, Dean was scarcely at the studio at all. He came in a few times and slouched in a front row. He never participated in anything." Lee Strasberg says Jimmy did do some studying and sat in as an observer of the group's methods but he could never afford to join them on a permanent basis. Then, after one incident when he did some reading that was sharply criticized by a director, he walked out and never returned.

Jimmy's first good television part—albeit not a star role—was in a 1952 *Theatre Guild on the Air* presentation, *The Thief*, starring Diana Lynn. This teleplay, one of the series sponsored by the U.S. Steel Company, did little to advance his career.

At this juncture Rogers Brackett came East. He brought Jimmy along for a weekend at the Hudson River home of Broadway producer Lemuel Ayres. Ayres, and his wife, liked him well enough to invite him back for other weekends. And, when they planned a ten day cruise to Cape Cod on their luxury sloop, they offered to take him along as paid member of their informal crew.

During this trip Ayres learned about Jimmy's theatrical aspirations when he mentioned his disappointment over his failure to be signed by C.B.S. for the role of Clarence Day, Jr. in the forthcoming *Life With Father* series. He had studied the part for weeks and thought his chances of being signed had been good. His other hopeful prospect, an audition for a part as one of the teenagers in Mary Chase's comedy *Bernadine* also fell through. Ayres, preparing to produce N. Richard Nash's play *See the Jaguar* that winter, told Jimmy when he was ready to cast it he would consider him for a part.

And when Jimmy returned from an Indiana visit that fall, Ayres, true to his word, called him to come and read for director Michael Gordon.







The cast of *See the Jaguar* included such able performers as Arthur Kennedy, Constance Ford and Cameron Prud'homme. Received with less than enthusiasm by critics, it premiered in New York at the Cort Theatre on December 3, 1952 and closed after six performances. Reviewers, deploring it as a contrivance of jejune symbolism, had high praise for the cast and all of them paid tribute to the young actor who played the wraith-like and illiterate Wally Wilkins. In his *Herald Tribune* review, Walter Kerr wrote, "James Dean adds an extraordinary performance in an almost impossible role: that of a bewildered lad who has been completely shut off from a vicious world by an overzealous mother and who is coming upon both beauty and the brutality of the mountain for the first time."

From the chaos of this flop Jimmy's stock ascended and 1953 was a notable television year for him. In January he had a good part in a drama shown on the *Kate Smith Show* and fair to good supporting roles in two *T-Men in Action* stanzas. He was considered worthwhile enough to be interviewed at the end of a *Lux Video Theatre* presentation. His first starring role, in Rod Serling's *A Long Time Till Dawn*, was a *Kraft Theatre* telecast in which he gave a really excellent performance as a confused murderer holed up in a farmhouse while awaiting capture by the police. That same November he co-starred with Dorothy Gish, Vaughn Taylor and Ed Begley in *Harvest*, one of the *Robert Montgomery Presents* dramas.

During 1953 television work was so plentiful Jimmy could afford to turn down MGM's invitation to return to Hollywood for a screen test. Later in the year producer Billy Rose signed him for an important role as a blackmailing Arab boy involved in a sordid affair with a homosexual tourist in the Ruth and Augustus Goetz dramatization of Andre Gide's novel *The Immoralist*. Louis Jourdan and Geraldine Page co-starred.

The out of town tryouts of *The Immoralist* ran into production difficulties and director Daniel Mann, in addition to these headaches, had trouble with Jimmy. In the course of extensive re-writing the part of the Arab boy was greatly reduced. Jimmy's complaints about having his role trimmed and threats to break his contract by quitting the play were finally resolved by an Actor's Equity moderator.

*The Immoralist* opened at New York's Royale Theatre on February 3, 1954. Despite uniformly excellent notices for the play and the cast, the public remained somewhat indifferent to it. Despite his truncated role and the fact that he was terribly miscast, James Dean won the "Daniel Blum Theatre Award" as the most promising actor of the year. *The Immoralist* limped along for a few months but Jimmy

left the cast soon after the opening to return to TV work.

He co-starred with Mildred Dunnock in *Padlocks*, one of the half-hour plays presented on the popular suspense series *Danger*. In *Run Like A Thief*, a *Philco Playhouse* drama, he was a bellboy suspected of being dishonest by Gusti Huber and Kurt Kaszner. Most of these television roles were similar; a frustrated youth whose last desperate attempt to find love in his lonely world culminates in rejection and a conflict with authority. Many were speciously written but Jimmy, through the force of his personality and some acting ability, managed to overcome this deficiency as well as indifferent direction. He made most of these characters seem genuine.

After reading the script of *East of Eden*, a property Warner Brothers was having trouble casting, Jane Deacy immediately started a campaign to get Jimmy the prize role of Cal Trask. She overcame Elia Kazan's doubts that her client was capable of handling the role. Kazan had seen him at the Actors Studio and in two plays but it was not until after he met Jimmy and had him study and read the script that he was favorably impressed. He sensed that properly directed and playing exactly the right role, James Dean could be a star. Regardless of Kazan's personal feelings and opinions of Jimmy—he referred to him as a "Creep"—he thought he could bring out the best in him as an actor and that *East of Eden* was the ideal vehicle with which to do that. Relying on Kazan's judgment, Warners—voicing some trepidation—gave him a screen test. They soon signed the unknown actor to star in a major production.

When the news of his good fortune broke, everyone was asking who James Dean was and why he was considered such a "find." Movie editors from all the New York newspapers interviewed him. And (alphabetically), Hedda, Louella, Sheila and Walter all devoted space to him—sight unseen.

And Jimmy, temporarily discarding his blue jeans and T-shirt for a tweed suit, a white shirt and a necktie, took on the onslaught of interviewers. He gave out statements like this:

"An actor must interpret life and in order to do that he must be willing to accept all experiences that life has to offer. In fact, he must seek out more of life than life puts at his feet. In the short span of his lifetime, an actor must learn all there is to know, experience all there is to experience or approach that state as closely as possible. He must be super human in his endless struggle to inform himself. He must be relentless in his efforts to store away in the warehouse of his subconscious everything that he might be called upon to use in the expression of his art. Nothing should be more important to the artist than life and the living of it, not even the ego. To grasp the full sig-





nificance of life is the actor's duty; to interpret it, his problem; and to express it, his dedication."

Before arriving in Hollywood, he stopped in Fairmount for a visit and was given the kind of hometown welcome reserved for heroes. While there an event occurred which doubled the mounting excitement and interest he was already creating.

Twentieth Century Fox offered him, without a screen test, the leading role in their multi-million dollar spectacle *The Egyptian*. This was the film that Marlon Brando had walked out on leaving the studio with a production ready for the cameras and no star. Like his idol—the actor he was often accused of imitating—Jimmy also turned down the role.

Late in 1954 he started to work. Warner's publicity department gave him a "full treatment—with extras" press campaign.

Jimmy rented an apartment in Burbank close to the studio that he shared with Dick Davalos, the actor who was playing his twin brother in *East of Eden*. He also became friendly with talent agent Dick Clayton who had taken on the task of handling his contract business and public relations. Clayton negotiated a large salary advance for Jimmy which allowed him to indulge in some upper-bracket nightlife. He became a lively figure around the Hollywood high spots and showed up nightly at various clubs in the company of some starlet happy to share his spotlight.

He met Pier Angeli and dated her steady. He gave out statements professing his love for her and hopes that they would be married. Miss Angeli's mother did not approve of this romance and was against such a marriage. Her objection, it has been said, was because of a difference in religion.

Appearing to be genuinely heartbroken by his shattered love affair, Jimmy reverted to his former recklessness and started racing around town on a motorcycle. Warners, remembering the accidents Van Johnson and Keenan Wynn had and the production delays they caused MGM, issued a dictate that he was not to ride a motorcycle or race his recently purchased sportscar while working on a film.

*East of Eden*, based only on the last part of John Steinbeck's rambling novel, had a most apposite role for Dean; the unloved son of a self-righteous farmer whose wife had deserted him and her children for a life as a whorehouse madam. As the groping youth desperate to be loved and respected by the statue-warm father he idolized, Jimmy reached the hearts

Intending to star in a Western about Billy the Kid after *GIANT*, Jimmy practiced on the rifle range and learned to ride and rope.



of everyone with his magnificent performance. The film, also enhanced by the brilliant work of Raymond Massey, Julie Harris, Burl Ives, Jo Van Fleet and Albert Dekker, is one of the great motion pictures of the last decade. Most remarkable of all is the performance that Kazan managed to get out of Jimmy. Star and director, who clashed often during the filming, were both nominated for Academy Awards.

Jimmy worked with Natalie Wood for the first time while making *East of Eden*. This was when they appeared in a *General Electric Theatre* television production, *I Am a Fool*. Eddie Albert co-starred. Indirectly this teleplay led to Natalie Wood's current popularity. On the strength of her performance—and the fact that she and Jimmy were a compatible team—she was selected to appear in his next film. This was *Rebel Without A Cause* which Warners rushed into production after studio executives had seen a rough cut of *East of Eden*.

Nicholas Ray's *Rebel Without A Cause* is really an amazing film. It's a marathon of dishonest social comments—including the false assumption that children from middle-class homes turn to crime and juvenile delinquency as often as underprivileged children. It's a talkathon involving unbelievable Clifford Odets type characters who, elevated up the social ladder, spout dialogue as loquacious as any ever conceived by Eugene O'Neill. But the whole thing, spiced with sex and punctuated with phony melodrama, plays very well and is always fascinating to watch. Jimmy, again in conflict with authority because of his search for love and the understanding that his mis-mated parents are incapable of giving, played a contemporary youth whose story, so in keeping with the tenor of the times, seemed to be a composite case history of every troubled teenager.

After *East of Eden* was nationally released—and critically acclaimed—James Dean became the most publicized actor in Hollywood. His photograph appeared regularly on the covers of the largest selling movie fan magazines. Most stories contained illusions to his being an only child and all of them stressed the fact that his mother had died when he was very young. Teenage boys wanted to be like him, be his buddy or his brother. Girls wanted to shelter him, mother him or marry him—depending on how he affected their emotional instincts. And parents, reading about his escapades, wanted to strangle him. They worried more about what effect he was having on their children than how sudden popularity had affected him.

George Scullin, in a *Look* magazine article, wrote, "Dean was only too eager to be overwhelmed. He ignored the old saying that an actor who wants to preserve his integrity should never believe his publicity. He read avidly every word of his build-up, especially those that compared him to Marlon Brando. Brando, in his first years in Hollywood, had

not been noted for his diplomacy; Dean began to outdo him. Brando had received some recognition as the worst-dressed man in Hollywood; Dean proceeded to be even sloppier. Brando roared around Hollywood on a motorcycle; Dean, with black leather jacket, wide belt and black boots, outdid Brando at his wildest in *The Wild One*.

"Between completion of *East of Eden* and the start of *Rebel Without A Cause*, Dean became impossible . . . He collected a small crew of sycophants, and what gaucheries he couldn't think of, they did."

When *Rebel Without A Cause* was completed, Warners began negotiating a new contract for Jimmy. This agreement would pay him \$100,000 a film for seven years and allow him to make outside pictures. Among the loan-out deals being considered was an offer from MGM for him to play Rocky Graziano in *Somebody Up There Likes Me* and one from Paramount for the Jim Piersall role in *Fear Strikes Out*. Warner's plans included starring him in a Western about Billy the Kid in which the outlaw would not be depicted as a sympathetic character but as a baby-faced, cold-blooded killer. There was talk he would star in the film version of *Damn Yankees*, a Broadway musical the studio had recently purchased. Jimmy anticipated working in these films but his next was his last. Oddly enough, he had never been seriously considered for the Jett Rink role in *Giant* until after the late Alan Ladd, director George Stevens' choice, rejected the part. Then Warners, hoping Stevens might be able to get a performance out of Jimmy other than the one successful image he had so far projected, gave him the assignment. Dean was none too happy with it. Nor was he exactly amenable towards Stevens or the director's efforts to expand his forte.

Jimmy's last television work was a role in a *Schlitz Playhouse* drama, *The Unlighted Road*, which was telecast for the first time on May 6, 1955—the week principal photography started on his last motion picture. This teleplay has been re-run, at least once a season, since its premiere.

*Giant*, filmed partly on location in Marfa, Texas, is a 197 minute color spectacle based on Edna Ferber's popular and synthetic fictions about the Lone Star state. Elizabeth Taylor and Rock Hudson co-starred with Jimmy. It was not released until a year after completion. By then Jimmy was dead. The fact accounts for much of *Giant's* fantastic financial success. Bosley Crowther, in the *New York Times*, climaxed his rave review with, "It is the late James Dean who makes the malignant role of the surly ranch hand who becomes an oil baron the most tangy and corrosive in the film. Mr. Dean plays this curious villain with stylized spookiness—a sly sort of off-languor and slur of language—that concentrates spite. This is a haunting capstone to the brief career of Mr. Dean." Some critics thought Jimmy's performance





Jimmy and Academy Award winner Mercedes MacCambridge in a scene from George Stevens' *GIANT*, one of the all-time top money making films.

was his least effective one and that his makeup, in the final scenes, was maladroit. Regardless of individual opinions about *Giant*—and these opinions are diverse—there can be no argument about its success. It's among the top money-making films of all time.

In March of 1955 Jimmy had won the Palm Springs Road Race contest for production cars under 1500 cc. Once his scenes in *Giant* were completed his plan was to enter another race to be held Sunday, October 2, 1955 at Salinas, California. On Friday afternoon, two days before the race, he left Los Angeles for Salinas. Riding with him was Rolf Wuetherich, a mechanic for the Porsche factory. Following in another car was Jimmy's close friend, photographer Sanford Roth.

At a highway intersection twenty-eight miles outside of Paso Robles, Jimmy's car crashed into one driven by Donald Turnupseed, a student from Tulare. Turnupseed suffered only minor injuries in the collision. The mechanic suffered a broken leg and numerous head injuries. Jimmy, who had been driving his Porsche, died almost instantly. His average speed from Los Angeles to where he had crashed had been more than 80 mph. It has never been ascertained whether or not he had been wearing eyeglasses or corrective lens goggles at the time of the accident. (His eyesight had been faulty and offscreen he was required to wear eyeglasses.)

Eight days later he was buried in Fairmount in a grave next to the one of his mother. More than three thousand people attended the graveside services. The Reverend Ken Harvey, concluding a eulogy—"The Life of James Dean—A Drama in Three Acts," said, "The career of James Dean has not ended. It has just begun. And God himself is directing the production."

Four days later—on October 12th—a coroner's jury called his death an accident and ruled there was no

criminal negligence.

James Dean's overnight, meteoric rise to stardom turned out to be the fame that endures, intensifies and becomes a part of filmlore.

"In sixteen months of acting he left a more lasting impression on the public than many stars do in thirty years," said Henry Ginsberg, the producer of *Giant*. "I can understand why the impact of his personality was so great. Though he was not an easy person to know, it was worth breaking his reserve. He was naturally shy and did not like to make small talk. Once Jimmy felt he could trust a person he opened up. He was an exciting and stimulating person to be with. I believe he could be described as a genius."

George Stevens, who found him most difficult to work with, does not agree with most James Dean evaluations. "He'd hardly broken water, flashing in the air like a trout. A few more films and the fans wouldn't have been so bereft. This first bright phase would have become an ordinary light and would not have produced this kind of thing."

"This kind of thing" which Stevens referred to is The James Dean Legend. Like many legends it started, logically enough, with rumors—minutes after he died on Grapevine Road.

The first of many wide-spread stories concerning him was gossip to the effect that his accident was really suicide by default. Self-destruction from a subconscious death wish. But those who knew Jimmy at all know he was too eager to embrace the possibilities the world at large was offering and his own world in particular was making a reality to have seriously considered suicide. Everyone has his dark moments and Jimmy too was plagued with self-doubts and periods of depression. Although introspective, unpredictable and artistically self-centered,





Elizabeth Taylor (upper left) became a close friend while making GIANT. Hearing of his death, she had to be put under sedation. Natalie Wood (above) was also heart-broken. Jim Backus, who played his father in REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE, regarded Jimmy as a friend and an actor destined for greatness. Beautiful Jeanne Baird (upper right) presented Jimmy with a racing trophy weeks before he died.







he was also the enthusiastic and flamboyant youth who said, "If I live to be a hundred there won't be enough time to do everything I want to."

Another bizarre rumor was probably the result of the impact his death had on the nation. For so strong was his power to fascinate and so magnetic his attraction to teenagers that many of them soon announced, with dogmatic insistence, that he was not dead. He had survived the collision but was horribly mutilated. So irreparable were his mind and body that he was hidden away in a sanitorium—or an isolated farmhouse—to live out his pain-wracked days away from public scrutiny.

But the James Dean worshippers who did believe he was dead were soon delving into the mystic arts and putting their occult powers into action. Messages, purportedly from the deceased, started emanating from the beyond to be received by persons who had known or admired him. Celestial vibrations were felt all the way from Shubert Alley to Googie's Restaurant on Sunset Boulevard. Some messages were very personal and some were fairly innocuous. One-shot magazines flooded the newsstands carrying such banner-line sensations as "Jimmy's Message From Beyond," "James Dean Still Lives!" "Come Back Jimmy—Wherever You Are!" and "Jimmy Dean Returns!" (Read his own words—"How I found a new life beyond death through one girl's love . . ."). Each article added a little nuance to the described seance. To give these fifty cent fictions some semblance of authenticity, players with whom Dean had worked—Sal Mineo, Natalie Wood, Nick Adams, et al—were induced to add their reminiscences of Jimmy.

Nick Adams, in one such story, recalled Jimmy had once said to him, "There are six needs in life: love, security, self-esteem, recognition, new experience and last, but not least, the need for creative expression." These were "before" not "after" death observations.

And Casanova never had a parade of sweethearts equal to the total number of girls suddenly heart-broken by Jimmy's death. Each bereaved belle, for \$25 for 500 words, recalled she had been the true love of his life. And they assured readers that if Jimmy had lived he would have married her. These distraught damsels presented a portrait of someone so unique and so transcended from the reality of mere mortality that each was certain he is destined for sainthood.

There is no way of accurately accounting for the total psychological effect such stories had. One psychologist called it, "A curious case of juvenile frustration, sex-substitution and hero worship running like electrical lines into a centrally convenient fuse box."

That "fuse box" was also a coin box.

All members of movements to perpetuate his memory were thoroughly exploited.

James Dean masks, jackets, pocket knives, photographs and phonograph recordings became the products of million dollar businesses. Mementoes for sale included pieces of shattered glass, bits of metal and paint scrapings, all supposedly remnants of the Dean death car. The demand for these "souvenirs" was so overwhelming that the Porsche seemed to have the dimension of a Greyhound bus. Chips from his tombstone, set in "gold-filled" rings, sold for prices outrageous enough to give the purchasers esteem and turn friends—and fingers—green. Amateur oil paintings, selling for \$40 to \$100 a copy, were so popular artists worked in assembly line production to turn out three and four a day. Dean photographs embedded in plastic jewelry or encased in plastic cases were suddenly status symbols to the nymphs of the nuclear age. Small busts, on sale in a Hollywood bookstore, sold for \$30 each until the supply became depleted and was replaced by smaller models at higher prices.





The phonograph albums dedicated to James Dean defy cataloguing. A color photograph of him on an album jacket guaranteed a best selling record. This musical memorabilia includes soundtrack recordings from his films; sophomoric sentiments set to sickening music; homemade tapes of Jimmy playing the bongo drums at a friend's apartment; and, mood music he was supposed to have listened to in a Hollywood ginmill where he occasionally stopped in for a beer. Few were legitimately worthwhile but all of them were big sellers.

Then there were the single records: "A Boy Named Jimmy Dean"; "Hymn for James Dean"; "Jimmy Dean Is Not Dead"; "The Ballad of James Dean"; "Jimmy, Jimmy"; "The Racer Lives Forever"; "The Story of James Dean"; "His Name Was Dean." These platters served the eulogies of Mississippi caterwaulers, the sufferings of constipated hillbilly baladeers, the purple brief of blues singers and the swan songs of new recording "artists."

Within nine months after Jimmy's death there were more than four hundred fan clubs in the U.S., Canada, Europe and South America. (It took a year for them to get organized in Japan, Australia and Africa.)

Maila Nurmi, a television actress popularly known as Vampira, and a close friend of the late James Dean (they were never too friendly or close while he was alive), made valiant efforts to establish what she called, "An annual memorial function for Jimmy to be held in Hollywood every year." Her efforts never materialized into anything more than publicity.

And there was still a lot of mileage left in the Porsche! After a successful tour, during which it was displayed for 50¢ a ticket, a doctor in Burbank purchased it for \$1,000. A couple of months later (December 1956) it was exhibited at the International

Motor Sports Show in the Hollywood Exhibition Building.

Among the fifty original statues of Hollywood stars put on display at the "Movieland Wax Museum" in Buena Park, California is a none too recognizable figure of Dean.

George W. George and Robert Altman started a documentary film, *The James Dean Story*, which they completed and which was released in 1957. This 83 minute feature, nothing more than another money-grubbing venture, comprised of still photographs of Jimmy, interviews with people who had known him in New York, Hollywood and his hometown and others who were capable of reading into their brief encounters with him a perceptive insight that a trained analyst could not have achieved after months of study. This documentary had financial troubles until Warner Brothers, who released it, supplied the funds necessary to finish it and add the only distinction it has—a part of one of Jimmy's screen tests and some other previously discarded film bits. His fans, now inured to merchandise of specious value, stayed away from it almost en masse.

There have been sincere efforts to commemorate James Dean's name.

His fan clubs have made generous donations to worthwhile charities. Yearly pilgrimages to his grave have resulted in friendships being established between fans all over the world.

A James Dean Foundation, the aim of which was to provide scholarships for young performers, was established in New York. Lack of funds, and a premature anxiety to get it started, soon halted its activities.

Disappointing too was the final collapse of the Dean Foundation in Fairmount, Indiana. It lasted longer than the New York group—almost four years—but without steady financial assistance from an organization such as Warner Brothers (who can well





Jimmy filled his off-screen life with a lust for living but he still had time to play with his cousin (far left), visit his old New York haunts and return calls from friends of his pre-Hollywood days.

afford supporting a worthwhile and tax deductible cause) a project such as this has little chance of survival. Contributions from fan clubs kept this one active but none of the students selected by the scholarship committee attained the kind of prominence which might have sparked interest in the Foundation from the press.

In February of 1956 *Photoplay* cited James Dean as the outstanding actor of 1955 for his performances in *Rebel Without A Cause* and *East of Eden*. That same month he received his first posthumous Academy Award nomination. *Modern Screen* voted him their "Special Achievement Award." Motion Picture Exhibitors announced that their patrons, in an annual national poll, had named James Dean as the best actor of 1955. A year later this same poll also placed him in first position. The Hollywood Foreign Press Association voted him "The World's Favorite Actor" (in 1957!). He won the 1956 English Academy Award. France awarded him a "Crystal Star" citation—the French Film Academy's highest honor. And he won annual acting award honors in Belgium, Finland, Japan and Germany. In 1957 he was nominated for his *second* posthumous Academy Award! No other screen personality, dead or alive, has ever received so many accolades in so brief a time.

And with so much recognition it can justly be asked why the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has failed to honor him with a "Special Oscar" since members did not vote him an award. James Dean partisans, and some Academy members, believe that when the ruthless exploitation has been forgotten, and their actions cannot be mistaken for crass commercialism, then the Academy's Board of Governors will act to correct this oversight.

But the Jimmy Dean furor hasn't dimmed. A new generation, seeing two of his movies regularly on television, consider him "One of us." Today's teenagers also see themselves reflected in the lad whose

strange melancholy haunted even his most exalted moments. And they, more than many who knew him well, perceive that his life was never a truly happy one. For the somber-eyed romantic who captured the hearts of the world was spiritually lonely.

Hedda Hopper, long after his death, wrote her feelings:

"I haven't yet recovered from the tragic and untimely death of Jimmy Dean, one of the greatest talents I've come across in many a year. There were many here who thought he was impossible, but those who did, never took the trouble to understand what made him tick. He would knuckle to no man nor be a slave to any. But through understanding and affection he would do anything. His talent has been likened to that of Marlon Brando. I believe, had he lived, he would have gone far ahead of Brando."

Recently, a Los Angeles television show presented, for the sixth or seventh time, a special Sunday night telecast of *Rebel Without A Cause*. Shown in prime time it out-rated all competing shows. The following day, reporter Cecil Smith, in his *Los Angeles Times* column, wrote, "The movie was first-rate. I suppose the thing that made Dean fascinating to youth was his moody, misunderstood manner of unsure rebellion. His inarticulate desire to conform to the crowd—which might serve to define American teenagers and with which they are easily identified."

Later that same week a spokesman for Warner Brothers reported that fan mail, addressed to James Dean, is still around a thousand letters a month.

Almost ten years after his death his light hasn't dimmed nor has name been forgotten. His legend still grows.

(JAMES DEAN by Gene Ringgold originally appeared in *SCREEN FACTS* magazine. *SCREEN LEGENDS* wishes to thank its editor, Alan G. Barbour, for his permission to reprint it.)



## A Complete JAMES DEAN Index

### MOTION PICTURES:

1. SAILOR BEWARE. Paramount. 1951. Directed by Hal Walker. Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis, Corinne Calvert, Marion Marshall, Robert Strauss.
2. FIXED BAYONETS. 20th Century Fox. Directed by Samuel Fuller. Richard Basehart, Gene Evans, Michael O'Shea, Richard Hylton, Skip Homeier.
3. HAS ANYBODY SEEN MY GAL? Universal-International. 1953. Directed by Douglas Sirk. Charles Coburn, Piper Laurie, Lynn Bari, Rock Hudson, Gigi Perreau, William Reynolds, Larry Gates.
4. TROUBLE ALONG THE WAY. Warner Brothers. 1953. Directed by Michael Curtiz. John Wayne, Donna Reed, Charles Coburn, Sherry Jackson, Marie Windsor, Tom Helmore, Dobbs Greer, Chuck Connors, Leif Erickson.
5. EAST OF EDEN. Warner Brothers. 1955. Directed by Elia Kazan. Julie Harris, Raymond Massey, Burl Ives, Albert Dekker, Jo Van Fleet, Dick Davalos.
6. REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE. Warner Brothers. 1955. Directed by Nicholas Ray. Natalie Wood, Sal Mineo, Jim Backus, Ann Doran, Rochelle Hudson, William Hopper, Corey Allen.
7. GIANT. Warner Brothers. 1956. Directed by George Stevens. Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson, Carroll Baker, Jane Withers, Mercedes MacCambridge, Chill Wills, Sal Mineo, Rod Taylor, Earl Holliman.
8. THE JAMES DEAN STORY. Warner Brothers. 1957. Directed by George W. George and Robert Altman. Narrated by Martin Gabel.

### TELEVISION:

- 1950: Pepsi Cola Commercial; HILL NUMBER ONE," a one hour play produced by Jerry Fairbanks.
- 1951: "Beat the Clock" (standby work on this game show); bits in "Tales of Tomorrow," "T-Men in Action," "Martin Kane," "Campbell Sound Stage," "Kraft Theatre" and "Danger."
- 1952: "Theatre Guild on the Air" (THE THIEF); "Danger" (DEATH SENTENCE); "T-Men in Action" (CASE OF THE WATCHFUL DOG and SOMETHING FOR AN EMPTY BRIEFCASE). All bit parts.
- 1953: "Kate Smith Show" (TAKEN FROM THE

HOUND OF HEAVEN); "Lux Video Theatre" (Interview); "Armstrong Circle Theatre" (THE BELLS OF COCKAIGNE); "T-Men in Action" (CASE OF THE SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN); "The Big Story"; "Kraft Theatre" (KEEP OUR HONOR BRIGHT); "Campbell Sound Stage" (LIFE SENTENCE); "Robert Montgomery Presents" (HARVEST); "Kraft Theatre" (A LONG TIME TILL DAWN); "Danger" (PADLOCKS); "You Are There"; "Hallmark Playhouse"; "Philco Playhouse" (RUN LIKE A THIEF).

1954: "General Electric Theatre" (I AM A FOOL).

1955: "Schlitz Playhouse" (THE UNLIGHTED ROAD).

1956: "Steve Allen Show" (a visit to Dean's hometown).

The above work is the bulk of Dean's television appearances. There have been others mentioned which have not been confirmed. He has also been featured on two documentaries, one a tribute to Dean was shown on the C. B. S. network in 1957, the other, a David Wolper "Hollywood and the Stars" telecast (TEENAGE IDOLS) shown in 1964 featured another tribute to Dean.

### RADIO:

"Stars Over Hollywood," "Alias Jane Doe" and "Sam Spade." (All bit parts.)

### THEATRE:

1. SEE THE JAGUAR. A three-act play by N. Richard Nash. Produced by Lemuel Ayres in association with Helen Jacobson. Directed by Michael Gordon. (Premiered at the Cort Theatre on December 3, 1952)

Arthur Kennedy, Constance Ford, Cameron Prud'homme, George Tyne, Roy Fant, David Clark, Phillip Pine were the other players in the cast.

2. THE IMMORALIST. A three-act play by Ruth and Augustus Goetz based on Andre Gide's novel. Produced by Billy Rose. Directed by Daniel Mann. (Premiered at the Royal Theatre on February 8, 1954)

Louis Jordan, Geraldine Page, Charles Dingle, Paul Huber, Jon Heldabrand, David J. Stewart, Adelaide Klein were the other players in the cast.







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Tennessee Williams' 'Baby Doll'

Legion of Decency Says

Film Cens 3 Clerics Defend

Spellman W... 'Doll's' Showing

'Baby Doll' Is Sin

Francis Cardinal Spellman, in an unprecedented

'BABY DOLL

IN NEW

ROW

Kazan, Tennessee Williams Reply'

Spellman Attack on 'Baby Doll'

'Baby Doll'

Called Lewd

SRO FOR 'BABY DOLL' PREMIERE of Decency of the

Pike Clashes With Spellman On 'Baby Doll'

KENNEDY'S CHAIN BAR'S 'BABY DOLL'

Ex-Envo

Ban on 'Doll' Favored By Jersey City Mayor

Jersey City Mayor Bernard J. ...

Kazan Genius Revealed in 'Baby Doll'

Call 'Baby Doll' Immoral

'Baby Doll' Is Approved by British Priest For Showing to Adult Roman Catholics

In a rare talk from the pulpit, ...







# CARROLL BAKER

*From Baby Doll to Harlow*

by P. F. Matteo, Jr.





"Carroll Baker is destined to become a great star."

—JAMES DEAN, 1955

Discussing Carroll Baker's potential stardom while directing her in *Baby Doll*, Elia Kazan said, "She's nice and sweet in her face but she's sexy and ambitious. She knows what she wants and goes after it. She's going to make a terrific splash. She is going to create, in her way, as much of a sensation as James Dean did. She has a great talent, interpretation and, she is endowed with the ability to be her own severest critic."

Not long after Kazan made these observations, *Baby Doll* was released. As predicted, Carroll Baker was hailed as a "find". Esteemed critics and filmgoers acclaimed her and she was regarded as "the best new dramatic actress in motion pictures." Her unforgettable portrayal of *Baby Doll* was favorably compared to some other memorable screen performances which







had catapulted comparatively unknown actresses to immediate fame: Bette Davis in *Of Human Bondage*; Katharine Hepburn in *A Bill of Divorcement*; and, Ida Lupino in *The Light That Failed*.

Carroll Baker reaffirmed the initial accolades during the next eight years with a series of excellent performances in roles that allowed her an opportunity to depict a wide range of emotions. Last year everyone who had been long impressed by her acting accomplishments suddenly found themselves captivated by her sex appeal in *The Carpetbaggers*. Acclaimed as the screen's newest sex symbol and love goddess, Carroll became the successor of such luminous moths as Jean Harlow, Lana Turner, Marilyn Monroe and Brigitte Bardot. Occasionally a love goddess becomes a good actress but Carroll's variation, a fine actress emerging from her Thespian cocoon to spread her wings as an Aphrodite butterfly, was unique — even in Hollywood. So is her life story. Her path to success was a rocky road and one that might have defeated a less hearty creature. Her overnight stardom in 1956 was the culmination of years of hard work, frustrations, disappointments and failures.

Carroll Baker was born on May 28, 1931 in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. William Baker, her father, owned a small farm which he lost during the depression because he was unable to pay his back taxes. For the next few years he worked as a door-to-door vacuum cleaner salesman throughout the New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia territory. What little money he earned from appliance sales was never enough to adequately provide for his wife Virginia and their daughter. In desperation, he took them along with him on the road. They lived like gypsies for several years — camping along the highways in summer and cooking out of doors. During the winter months they slept in the back seat of the company car. Their vagabond life soon became a routine: while Baker made his daily rounds, Carroll and her mother went to the movies.

"I was crazy about Shirley Temple pictures," she recalls, "I identified myself with her. I think a lot of little girls identified themselves with Shirley Temple during the depression. She had everything we didn't have. She had money and security and big dolls and she looked beautiful. I guess that I decided to be an actress when I was seven or eight years old. Neither my mother nor my father cared about this idea. They thought it was crazy."

In 1937, when Carroll was old enough to be enrolled in school, the Bakers settled in Greensburg, a small town thirty miles from Pittsburgh. "I could



Carroll as the rebellious daughter of Rock Hudson and Elizabeth Taylor (opposite page) who became infatuated with James Dean in *GIANT* (above). Said Carroll, "Jimmy was not an easy boy to know. I had some rapport with him because of similar New York background."

never fool anybody about my background if I wanted to," Carroll says. "X rays show that I still have coal dust in my lungs."

William Baker continued to work as a traveling salesman and Carroll's mother worked at various part-time jobs until her pregnancy forced her to retire temporarily until after her daughter Virginia was born the following year. When her mother returned to work, Carroll's maternal grandmother took care of the baby during the day. She saw to it that Carroll got her lunch, attended school and did her homework. Very little affection or consideration for the children was dispensed by the grandmother while she functioned as their guardian.

William Baker's homecomings, after his none too successful road trips, were never occasions for rejoicing but periods that Carroll came to dread because of the arguments and disagreements concerning his inability to adequately provide for his family. Domes-









tic discord increased until Baker and his wife were quite incompatible. The only thing they ever seemed to agree on was their opposition to Carroll's ambition to become an actress. Once, after auditioning for a part in a school play and being rejected, she rushed home in tears looking for encouragement, love and sympathy. Instead of the compassion she sorely needed, her mother made a "what have I always told you?" comment and her father gave her a brutal appraisal of her physical appearance.

"I locked myself in my room and cried all night," she recalls with bitterness. "My father had convinced me that I was just a homely girl and for years afterward I had a complex about my looks. Even now when somebody tells me I'm good-looking I have a hard time believing it."

Tormented by a belief that she was homely and frustrated because she felt unloved, she made an effort to win her family's affection and admiration by learning to dance. Without professional training, she studied and practiced dance routines. Her efforts were doubly exhausting because she had to contend with the disparaging remarks of her parents. Her endurance and dedication eventually brought a small triumph. Early in her high school career she was cast in the chorus of an operetta presented by her school.

Her father's observation that she would be wise to forget such nonsense and learn to type instead of continuing with dancing lessons couldn't dim her euphoria.

After World War II started, the manufacture of household appliances stopped. Out of a job, William Baker went into the gasoline business when he bought a service station in Greensburg in 1943.

Carroll, encouraged by being cast in several additional school entertainments, hoped her father might suggest that she take professional dance training and offer to pay for it. Instead, he insisted that she study typing and stenography. A good secretary, he advised her, is capable of supporting herself but an untalented dancer is not.

The Bakers divorced while Carroll was still in high school. Her sister went to live with her mother but she elected to live with her father. "Mother didn't care whether I left and my father didn't care whether I came," she recalls. "I went to him only because of my grandmother, who kept house for us. There was no great affection between us either. I think I was attached to her because she made me pretty dresses and baked wonderful pies."

She stayed with her father and grandmother until she graduated from high school. Then, in 1949, she





went to live with her mother and sister in Florida. She had seen little of them since the divorce. Their reunion was amiable but she remained with them only a few months while she attended St. Petersburg Junior College for one semester.

While in college she became friendly with Ann Warner, an actress who had been the voice of Betty Boop in the popular cartoon films. Miss Warner operated the Betty Boop School of Dancing and Carroll enrolled for classes. Her reputation as the academy's outstanding dancer brought offers of jobs in shows devised for the various conventions held in Florida each winter. Carroll's sundry sponsors included a cigar company and a manufacturer of fertilizer.

In 1950 she was hired to dance in the chorus of a show presented by the International Brotherhood of Magicians at their convention in Tampa. Burling Hall, a magician known as The Great Volta, singled



Scenes from **BABY DOLL**, the controversial film in which she was married to Karl Malden (opposite page) and seduced by Eli Wallach (top). She plays a Quaker schoolteacher in **CHEYENNE AUTUMN** (right).





She was outstanding in **THE BIG COUNTRY**, a spectacular Western with an all-star cast which included Gregory Peck and Chuck Connors (above and right) and Jean Simmons, Burl Ives and Charlton Heston.





ended she returned to New York and applied for parts in television commercials. She managed a few jobs on the strength of her movie credit. For awhile she was seen nightly on home screens in a filmed Coca-Cola commercial or one for Winston Cigarettes. A local channel in New York City hired her as a weather girl. This lasted until the night she lost her cue cards and ad-libbed a weather summary: "There's a lot of hot air blowing in from Texas."

After being fired from this job, she was hired for a small part in *Escapade*, a play which had a very brief Broadway run. One night, soon after it opened, she heard several cast members discussing the Actors Studio. "They hated it," she said. "But they made it sound fascinating. I decided to try for it the next day."

A member of the Actors Studio reviewing board was Jack Garfein, the young director who had been very successful with an off-Broadway production of Calder Willingham's play *End As A Man*. Garfein recognized her immediately after she came in and greeted her with, "You're the girl who jumped two feet in the air in *Escapade* to show surprise. You're the worst actress I have ever seen."

Explaining she had come for an audition with the idea that the Actors Studio might accept her for classes, Garfein asked her to read a scene from *Sullivan's Travels*, an old Preston Sturges movie. After his initial greeting, she wanted to leave as quickly as possible and told him that she would read for him some other time.

"You got something," Garfein told her. "I don't know just what, but something. Go ahead and audition. You may not pass it anyway. But don't ever give up."

She read for him and afterward she read for other members of the reviewing board. Her application for membership was rejected but Lee Strasberg, the founder of the Actors Studio, was impressed. He offered to coach her privately.

A week later, on March 1, 1954, she took her first acting lesson from Strasberg and had her first date with Jack Garfein. They "went steady" for a year and, on April 3, 1955, were married at the home of Lee Strasberg.

Carroll appeared in another Broadway play, Robert Anderson's *All Summer Long*, that year. Although it ran only four months, her notices were very good. When reminded of those rave reviews for her performance as Ruth, a neurotic Southern girl, she isn't pleased. "I didn't know what I was doing in *All Summer Long*," she says. "I didn't understand technique. My acting had no shading. But I could communicate emotion. That's what the audience got."

After *All Summer Long* closed, she appeared on television. Her most notable performance was in a drama in which she played a girl who murders her grandmother, stuffs her body in a closet and goes to a nearby saloon where she picks up a young stranger whom she intends framing for the crime.

Film director Nicholas Ray saw this little drama and he was impressed enough to ask Warner Brothers to give her a screen test. Ray thought she was a combination of Bette Davis and Ida Lupino and just the girl he needed to play opposite James Dean in his forthcoming juvenile delinquency drama, *Rebel Without A Cause*. Carroll made the test but Ray decided to use Natalie Wood in his film. He did not, however, forget about Carroll. When George Stevens started preparations for filming *Giant*, Ray showed him her test and a kinescope of that television play. Stevens, who isn't too easily impressed, was quite taken with her. "She's great," he said. "Sign her up at once."

Stevens cast her as Luz Benedict 2nd, the willful daughter of Rock Hudson and Elizabeth Taylor, in *Giant*. Jack Garfein accompanied her to Texas where it was filmed on location. For him it was a reunion with James Dean. They had been acquaintances since Dean's days at the Actors Studio. *Giant*, based on Edna Ferber's best-selling novel, was one of the most important film properties of the year. All the events that occurred while it was being filmed were big news. When George Stevens passed up opportunities to discuss his triumvirate of powerhouse stars—Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor and James Dean—to talk about the unknown Carroll Baker, newspapermen and columnists reported his comments. "She's a natural actress who instinctively does everything right," he said. "She is talented, well trained, and with a temperament to make the big league."

She returned to Hollywood when *Giant* was completed. Elia Kazan gave her a screen test and signed her for the title role in *Baby Doll*, a film based on a 15 year old Tennessee Williams vignette, *27 Wagons Full of Cotton*, which had been expanded and presented on Broadway the previous year. In announcing his decision to cast the virtually unknown and unseen Carroll Baker as the petulant, immature sex-pot of the Mississippi Delta, Kazan remarked, "The minute I heard her read, I knew I was listening to star material. She is, in a way, a feminine James Dean."

Kazan's masterpiece, *East of Eden* starring Jimmy Dean, was the current screen sensation. Dean had just died in an automobile accident and Carroll, as well as the rest of the country, were still in a state of shocked disbelief. She remembered that Jimmy had tried to steal a scene from her in *Giant* which they had played in a cafe. Most of the dialogue and attention in this crucial sequence was focused on her. Dean, in an attempt to divert attention, toyed with a prop glass. Instinctively, Carroll knew how to deal with a scene stealer. She started toying with a prop rose. For weeks afterward she and Dean delighted in recalling the incident and the story of "The Glass and the Rose" became an inside joke. She also remembered that "Jimmy and I did one



At the 34th Annual Oscarcast, Carroll and Richard Chamberlain presented Awards to Boris Leven, Vic Gangelin and William Fadiman. In *SOMETHING WILD* (right) she co-starred with Ralph Meeker. *BUT NOT FOR ME* (opposite page) with Clark Gable and Barry Coe was a sparkling comedy romance.



scene about 30 times, but he never did it exactly the same way twice. He was always unpredictable in his acting, but he acted with a fresh flavor."

To study the accents of the South and to be prepared for her role as *Baby Doll*, Carroll lived in Mississippi for a month before filming began in Benoit. After eight weeks on location, Kazan brought his company North to the old Flatbush studio of the Vitagraph Company and completed his interior scenes on a Brooklyn sound stage. He was intent on keeping *Baby Doll* under wraps until it was ready for release. His motives were not without good reason.

No other movie in 1956, or any year until then for that matter, created quite the sensation that *Baby Doll* did. *Time* magazine called it, "The dirtiest American-made motion picture that has ever been legally exhibited." This same review also said, "Nevertheless, the picture does have some not inconsiderable merits. Several scenes are models of what might be called *picarisque* comedy. And Director Kazan, even though he cannot seem to decide whether he is reciting a dark poem or just telling a dirty joke, has won skillful performances from his veterans (Karl Malden and (Eli) Wallach, and from newcomer Carroll Baker, of whom the public is certain to hear a great deal in the next year or two. As *Baby Doll*, she is the Coke sister of Southern folklore, all the way down to the bottom of the bottle."

The Catholic Legion of Decency condemned *Baby Doll* by declaring, "It dwells almost without variation or relief upon carnal suggestiveness." Francis Cardinal Spellman further denounced it, when, from the pulpit of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan, he

said, "In solicitude for the welfare of my country, I exhort Catholic people to refrain from patronizing this film under pain of sin."

Controversy over *Baby Doll's* morals and merits appeared in newspaper headlines for weeks. Several states banned commercial showings. The public, anxious to make their own judgment, turned it into a box-office blockbuster. Opinions were most divided but everyone agreed on one thing: Carroll Baker gave one of the most remarkable performances ever recorded on film. James Powers, in his *Variety* review, wrote, "Miss Baker's performance captures all the animal charm, the naivete, the vanity, contempt and rising passion of the flirtatious *Baby Doll*. Her voice, with its southern sing-song, her movements and her overall acting make her a top contender for this year's Academy Award . . . She etches a startlingly true-to-life figure that fairly seethes with emotion."

In New York City, where *Baby Doll* was doing big business, a two hundred and sixty feet long cradle, with Carroll sitting in it sucking her thumb, was painted on a billboard above Times Square. It remained there for months and automatically, Carroll Baker became the biggest thing on Broadway.

She went into temporary retirement after *Baby Doll* was released. She and Jack returned to their Manhattan apartment from a Florida location where he directed the film version of *End As A Man* (released as *The Strange One*) to await the birth of their daughter, Blanche. The following February, she was nominated for an Academy Award. In April she appeared on the New York portion of the Oscar-







The Actress vs. The Sex Symbol. With Peter Van Eyck in *STATION SEX—SAHARA* (below) and with James Stewart (bottom) in *HOW THE WEST WAS WON*. At the London premiere of *THE CARPETBAGGERS* and in a scene from it with George Peppard (opposite page).



cast and presented the "Best Song" Oscar for "Whatever Will Be, Will Be." But the "Best Actress" Award was given to Ingrid Bergman for her unforgettable performance in *Anastasia*. Carroll's disappointment had its consolations. She won accolades in *Life* magazine; the *Look Magazine Film Achievement Award*; and, the Foreign Press Club voted her the year's "Best Dramatic Actress."

Warner Brothers, who had her under contract, suspended her for refusing to star in *Too Much, Too Soon*, the Diana Barrymore autobiography which they eventually made with Dorothy Malone. She also refused to do *God's Little Acre*. The scripts submitted to her, she said, all started with the line "I am a nymphomaniac" or something similar. Warners labelled her "difficult." They could not understand why she refused to do variations of *Baby Doll*, which had made her a star.

Says Carroll, "I feel very fortunate that I was able to do a part that is considered memorable. You can work for years and years and never get a memorable part. *Baby Doll* played an important part in my career but she became a monstrous genie. I thought it much better not to work than to keep making the same film over and over. I don't think performers always know what is best for them to do but I feel they should be happy doing it. I also think they should be allowed to make some mistakes."

On the strength of just two films the press had acclaimed her as an actress and the public made her a "box-office" star. Anxious to advance her career, she was very opinionated about how she would do it. But roles in pictures like *Giant* and *Baby Doll* don't come along too often. By constantly refusing scripts she considered unsuitable, she won herself a non-conformist label. Frank enough to admit this—as well as other shortcomings, she was equally outspoken about Warner Brothers' short-sightedness. She became the talk of Hollywood—a town where she had virtually never been seen!

Trade papers headlined her return when she came back to play a rancher's willful daughter in William Wyler's all-star Western *The Big Country*. Once again she was distinctive among a powerhouse of big name stars (Gregory Peck, Jean Simmons, Charlton Heston, Chuck Connors, Charles Bickford and Burl Ives) and big screen spectacle. Her performance came off very well—especially her scenes with Gregory Peck when she varied from passion to petulance. Happy to be working, she had only kind things to say about the Hollywood matrix, her co-workers and her various directors. "I feel that I am a very lucky girl to have had George Stevens direct me in *Giant* and then Elia Kazan in *Baby Doll*. They are both wonderful teachers. William Wyler is another of our really great directors. He's a perfectionist," she exclaimed, "even if he is difficult to get along with on the set."

After she finished her loanout assignment to United Artists on *The Big Country*, Warners had planned to star her Erskine Caldwell's *Claudelle* *English*. The script was a combination of *Baby Doll* and *God's*













*Little Acre* and she promptly rejected it. Made a few years later, *Claudelle Inglish* did nothing to advance Diane McBain's career. At that moment, however, Warners wanted a leading lady, not a critic and they suspended her from salary. Soon after this story broke, she confirmed to Hedda Hopper that she was expecting another baby. The following January her son Herschel was born.

Six months later her differences with Warners were settled. Reporters devoted entire columns to telling the public about her next film. Everyone was surprised to read that she was coming back to work and overwhelmed to learn she would star in a five million dollar production of Max Reinhardt's stage spectacle *The Miracle*. Warner Brothers had purchased the screen rights to do it in 1927. Every actress that the studio ever had under contract, including Bette Davis, had hoped to be cast as the novice of a Spanish convent who falls in love with a French soldier during the 1812 Napoleonic invasion and eventually becomes a celebrated gypsy dancer. "It's one of the best parts that has come along for a young girl in years," she enthused to the press. "It's fantastic what it offers."

To fully prepare for such a demanding characterization, she and her husband flew to Spain. For two weeks they visited gypsy camps and studied flamenco dancers. "I didn't want to be a conventional movie gypsy. It would mean nothing."

As it turned out, all her preparations added up to

Continuing her enviable record, Carroll has starred in five block-buster films and worked for some of Hollywood's greatest directors. She co-stars with Richard Widmark (above) in John Ford's epic *CHEYENNE AUTUMN*.

nothing.

Principal photography commenced on *The Miracle* early in August 1958. By the middle of that month director Irving Rapper was complaining about his star. "When I make a suggestion she claims she has it all worked out ahead of time. She claims to be a 'method actress.' Frankly, I think she is cold and doesn't know the meaning of humbleness or appreciation." Finding no rapport with Rapper, Carroll deferred her performance to his wishes. The reviewers spared no one in their derision. Mis-cast Carroll and her co-stars—Katina Paxinou, Vittorio Gassman, Roger Moore and Walter Slezak—were cremated in the critical roastings. So was the script and the ponderous, old-fashioned way Irving Rapper directed it. *The Miracle* is a film that should be seen for perverse reasons: just to marvel at how a major studio and a top director were able to mis-manage five million dollars, a talented cast and a beloved stage classic and package the whole fiasco in lush color, enhanced by one of Max Steiner's best musical scores.

Warners were as unhappy as Carroll was with the results of *The Miracle*. When she asked to buy out her contract, they were most happy to assent. Recalling her profound disappointment, she said, "I was





difficult. But Warner Brothers were difficult too. When you are young, people try to intimidate you. When that happens, I'm the type who becomes as rigid as steel. It was like a campaign against me in Hollywood. Acting is very difficult, you know. I went through hell to get good roles at Warner Brothers. I did the best I could with what I was allowed to do."

Once free of her contract, she had no trouble freelancing. Paramount co-starred her with Clark Gable and Lilli Palmer in a sparkling re-make of Samson Raphaelson's play *Accent on Youth* called *But Not For Me*. (In 1936 Herbert Marshall and Sylvia Sydney had starred in the first film version. Bing Crosby appeared in a musical version, *Mr. Music*, in 1950.) Still happily remembered is a scene in *But Not For Me* when Clark Gable—the screen's King of Romance—teaches Barry Coe the art of properly kissing a girl.

Carroll, of course, was the girl. "I always had a crush on Clark Gable and when the studio tried to cut out some of the love scenes in the picture, I held out for all of them. Even after everyone was satisfied with this scene I wanted to run through it again."

That winter she turned down several film offers. Again there were stories that she was being difficult. Rumor had it too that her husband, Jack Garfein, influenced her and made all her career decisions. Carroll denied such stories when they appeared and so did George Stevens who had become friendly with Jack while making *Giant*. Said Stevens: "She and Jack usually talked over her scene if he was on the set. For that matter, I discussed many scenes with him myself. But he no more told Carroll what to do than he did me."

Jack Garfein, a talented stage and screen director,





From poverty to prostitution—the many of moods of SYLVIA. With George Maharis (opposite page) and with Lloyd Bochner (below).



came from a Czechoslovak-Jewish family. He was the only member of it who survived internment at the Belsen concentration camp. In 1943, his parents were cremated in the Auschwitz atrocities. He came to the U.S. friendless and penniless. He succeeded because he was ambitious, dedicated and talented. When he met Carroll he had already had some success. He seldom discusses his own career or any of his past, except where his wife is concerned. Recalling his courtship days, he said, "We didn't have enough money to get engaged. I hocked my watch for ten dollars, and Carroll also had ten, and we agreed that between us, we had enough money to get married and live for a week. We moved into a little apartment with a pull-out bed and ate 60-cent dinners of canned spaghetti. Life was wonderful." It's still wonderful, he thinks. "We live in turmoil but it never rules our

lives. We don't try to make show business a part of our home. We try to keep the conversation away from acting but we have to make an effort to do it."

Carroll, too, is determined that her marriage will work and last. Six months after she became Jack's wife, she converted to the Jewish faith because she wanted to do it. There had been little religion in her childhood and she found that Judaism gave her comfort and restored much of her faith. Her children, Blanche and Herschel, are named after Jack's parents. Whenever possible, she plans her life so that she can be with her husband while he is working on location. Occasionally this has meant foregoing a film role. "I can't be a vital actress if I deny myself as a human being," she says.

After she had contracted to star in *Bridge to the Sun*, Jack and the children accompanied her for the



location work in Japan and stayed with her while the interior scenes were filmed in Paris. She won international acclaim for her performance as Gwen Terasaki, an American girl who marries a Japanese diplomatic attache (James Shigeta) just before World War II. *Bridge to the Sun* was the official American entry in the 1961 Venice Film Festival and Carroll regards it as one of her favorite films. She has high regard too for French director Etienne Perier. He said this about her: "A lot of people in Hollywood warned me that I would be in for trouble with Carroll but she turned out to be an angel."

Her next picture, *Something Wild*, was filmed on location in New York and directed by her husband. Based on Alex Karmel's sensitive novel, *Mary Ann*, it was the first film made by Prometheus Productions—a producing company formed by the Garfeins. Despite Carroll's exceptionally moving portrayal of a high school girl who suffers the shock of having been brutally assaulted and raped, the film was not a success commercially. The theme presented some problems that were never fully resolved by the script. United Artists released *Something Wild* but they were unable to get it proper bookings. Definitely an art house film, it put into circuit runs where it was not supported. Later U.A. bought out the Garfeins interest in it, butchered it senselessly and lost more money on it when the poorly edited version played second runs.

*Something Wild* stirred up some controversy but it didn't receive the publicity *Baby Doll* did. Discussing the film, and Method Acting, with columnist Philip K. Scheuer, Carroll told him: "I can put any amount of work and concentration into a scene, but at a certain point—it happens very rarely to me—the scene takes on a life of its own and I have to be open for whatever stimuli are present to guide it. I can play a scene intelligently and study to know what makes up a particular character and still, when it's all added up, if that magical thing doesn't take place, it is just an acting scene and it has no depth.

"It's difficult to be truthful, even in acting, because just as we hide things in our personal lives we are also tempted to cover up embarrassing things in acting. For instance, if a character is very stupid or













Sex, sin and sand were the components of STATION SIX—SAHARA in which she co-starred with Peter Van Eyck (left).

hostile or aggressive, the actor himself doesn't really want to be thought of as this kind of human being and so there is a tendency to play-act, to make the character just so serious and no more."

Method Acting. Carroll believes, trains a performer to find all the qualities in a character that can be used as absolutely truthful feelings and reactions.

When *Something Wild* was completed, she returned to Hollywood to co-star in the first episode of Cinerama's *How the West Was Won*, a magnificent panorama of the Old West, directed by Henry Hathaway. As a frontier girl who marries a fur trapper (James Stewart) and lives to see her son (George Peppard) go off to fight in the Civil War, she had one of her most exacting roles and she did very well with it. She made a remarkable transition from a romantic girl to a middle-aged mother and once again, cast with a galaxy of top stars, she managed to be outstanding. She also found the Cinerama medium was a challenge. "You can't move fast in front of the camera or raise your arm too suddenly. If you do your arm will look a mile long. You must not overplay or the results will be awful. It's really quite difficult. To act before the Cinerama camera you have to un-learn much of what you have already learned about screen work."

*How the West Was Won* is an outstanding example of how exciting the new Cinerama process can be for films that have a story line and for audiences as well as performers. It is also a fine example of Americana on the screen and one of the great films of this decade.

She returned to the Broadway stage that fall to co-star with Van Johnson (star of *Easy to Love*, her first film) in *Come On Strong*, Garson Kanin's first comedy since *Born Yesterday*. It didn't come on strong enough and closed-fast. Then she went to England to make *Station Six, Sahara*, a melodrama that was partly filmed on location in the

Libyan Desert. A sexploiter, pure and simple, it didn't have a U.S. release until two years later. Carroll's part was an ambiguous one and although she received top billing, she doesn't appear until the film is almost half over. By then it was too late for anyone to save it from mediocrity. *Time* magazine, long a Carroll Baker champion, opined: "Garbo herself couldn't save this film from its script, which after Carroll's arrival, takes one trite turn after another."

Her next film, George Stevens' *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, was also a long time getting into theatres. And her role, Saint Veronica— who wipes the brow of Christ as He is led to Calvary, is also brief and a complete change of pace.

Carroll Baker changed her screen image with her next film. Starring as Rina Marlowe in Joseph E. Levine's multi-million production *The Carpetbaggers*, she played her first scene in the nude. This 55 second sequence was deleted from the prints of the film shown in the U.S. but what couldn't be seen on the screen, appeared in magazines and newspapers. A Paramount publicity agent routinely mailed some clips of this scene to newspapers. Overnight she became America's new sex symbol. Edward Dmytryk, the director of *The Carpetbaggers*, was among those most surprised by the public's reaction. "Carroll wasn't carefully created as a sex symbol. What shocked me was the way the studio and the press were just as excited as the public. All of a sudden she was more in demand than any other actress in Hollywood."

Said Carroll, "I see nothing extraordinary about removing my clothes for the cameras. The world is preoccupied with sex and I guess I'm a part of my time."

*The Carpetbaggers*, based on Harold Robbins' explosive best-seller, loosely suggests fictional characters not unlike Jean Harlow and Howard Hughes. A box-office sensation, it is already among the top money-making films. Once again Carroll was in the company of a powerhouse of star personalities—George Peppard, Alan Ladd, Martha Hyer, Robert Cummings and Lew Ayes—and her passionate performance as the sexually aggressive bombshell was outstanding. So much so that she has become a





screen legend in her time.

Before the public saw *The Carpetbaggers*, Carroll had already completed another film, John Ford's *Cheyenne Autumn*. Another blockbuster, another all-star cast, another change of pace for her (she plays a Quaker schoolteacher) and another outstanding performance. By now she had the Hollywood market cornered on a unique success pattern: do the unexpected and do it better than any other actress.

Following this brilliant blueprint, she returned to Paramount and starred in *Sylvia*. She plays a prostitute who must be physically abused before she can be sexually stimulated. Explaining the differences between the kind of screen roles she seeks and those she rejects, she said, "I try to represent on the screen the dilemma of the modern woman. She is a woman

who hasn't existed any where else in history. She's complicated and intelligent, and she hasn't got the good rules to fall back on... The modern woman has new freedoms, new problems to cope with, new wild passions. In a sense I just represent myself and what I know of other women and their hopes and fears."

Last Christmas *Playboy* confirmed that she is the new sex symbol supreme by devoting a picture layout to her. By then Joseph E. Levine had announced that he would star her in *Harlow*, a film based on Irving Schulman's best-selling biography. He also intends starring her in another controversial property—Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer*.

Last year she also made *Mr. Moses* in Kenya. In this Max Catto adventure story, she plays a mis-



**Carroll in Contrast.** The innocent school girl (left) being brutally assaulted in *SOMETHING WILD* vs. the sexually aggressive Rina Marlowe (right) of *THE CARPETBAGGERS*.

sionary's daughter who becomes involved with Robert Mitchum, a big game hunter. The press reported some restlessness among the natives while Carroll was in Kenya.

Also reported was the bedlam she created in Las Vegas when *Station Six-Sahara* premiered. She arrived for the opening of the film wearing a transparent gown that turned gamblers into gappers. A little later, at the premiere of *The Carpetbaggers* in England, she caused another riot. Her net dress revealed so much that its designer, Balmain, had to confirm, "Yes, it is a dress she is wearing."

It's difficult to determine how such publicity will eventually affect Carroll's marriage. She and Jack both recognize the dangers confronting their lives. Garfein is not the first man to discover that being married to a sex symbol has disadvantages. "I don't know what's going to happen to Carroll now," he says. "I think she will be all right."

Friends say there is little cause for worry. Carroll still regards her home, her children and her husband as the most important things in her life.

"The girl who says she is sacrificing everything for her career is really sacrificing her career. An actress grows as she is exposed to life, not hidden from it. Love, marriage and motherhood are the greatest and most rewarding experiences. Jack has helped me in every possible way. Ours is a complete partnership. He literally stopped working himself to get my career organized. And, in a way, even my children helped by understanding what is happening. They're past the baby stage and have become a little less dependent on me and more involved with school and their friends. But most of all, they're pleased that I am happy and working."

Thinking of all the good things that have happened in her life, she said, "I have matured enough to come to peace with success. When I was a child our household had much strife. If I ever write my biography, I will start when I was 18. I don't like to concentrate on things that were morbid. My parents gave me nothing spiritual or ethical or moral—no set of standards by which to live.

Beautiful and talented, Carroll is also intelligent. Her feet are firmly on the ground. It took a long time for her to find love, win admiration and achieve success. Things which she knows are easier to lose than attain. She knows this as few in Hollywood, or anywhere else, know it.





## CARROLL BAKER'S FILM CREDITS

(In order of their U.S. Release.)

1. **EASY TO LOVE** 1953. An MGM Picture directed by Charles Walters.
2. **GIANT** 1956. A Warner Bros. Picture directed by George Stevens.
3. **BABY DOLL** 1956. A Warner Bros. Picture directed by Elia Kazan.
4. **THE BIG COUNTRY** 1957. A United Artists Release directed by William Wyler.
5. **THE MIRACLE** 1958. A Warner Bros. Picture directed by Irving Rapper.
6. **BUT NOT FOR ME** 1959. A Paramount Picture directed by Walter Lang.
7. **SOMETHING WILD** 1960. A United Artists Release directed by Jack Garfein.
8. **BRIDGE TO THE SUN** 1961. An MGM Release directed by Etienne Perier.
9. **HOW THE WEST WAS WON** 1963. An MGM Release co-directed by Henry Hathaway, John Ford and George Marshall.
10. **STATION SIX—SAHARA** 1964. A United Artists Release directed by Seth Holt.
11. **THE CARPETBAGGERS** 1964. A Paramount Picture directed by Edward Dmytryk.
12. **CHEYENNE AUTUMN** 1964. A Warner Bros. Picture directed by John Ford.
13. **THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD** 1965. A United Artists Release directed by George Stevens.
14. **SYLVIA** 1965. A Paramount Picture directed by Gordon Douglas.
15. **MR. MOSES** 1965. A United Artists Release directed by Frank Ross.
16. **HARLOW** A Paramount Picture. In Preparation. To be directed by Gordon Douglas.

# SCREEN FACTS



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## STARLET IN SEARCH OF A NAME



Lucille LeSeur



Carol Peters



Ruby Stevens

What's in a name? Some actors and actresses are born with "box-office" names but many stars must be rechristened before the public notices and remembers them. Gina Lollobrigida and Anna Maria Alberghetti never had this problem. Their names are difficult to pronounce but once mastered, you're not likely to forget them. Nobody ever remembers the Joes, Charlies and Eddys but they never forget the Rocks, Tabs and Tonys.

An MGM starlet named Lucille LeSeur was only faintly noticed by the public. The studio thought her name hard to pronounce and phony sounding. They sponsored a fan magazine contest and a reader renamed her. "I have been grateful to her ever since," says Joan Crawford. Producer Willard Mack though Ruby Stevens was a fine actress but that her name lacked glamor. While rehearsing her in *The Noose* at the Belasco Theatre, he saw an old theatrical poster advertising Jane Stanwyck in *Barbara Frietchie* and from it he devised a name for his leading lady. After *The Noose* opened, Barbara Stanwyck became an overnight star. Moppet Carol Peters worked in two reel Westerns and later she was an ingenue in silent films. By then she had changed her last name to Lombard because Guy Lombardo was her favorite bandleader. It wasn't until a numerologist told her that 13 was her lucky number and suggested she add another letter to her name that she became Carole Lombard—the star.

Reconciled to the fact that everyone dislikes her name, lovely Brenda Greene (opposite page), a honey blonde from New Bern, North Carolina, is anxious to change it. One of Hollywood's newest and likeliest starlets, she appears destined for stardom. Before arriving in the film capital, she appeared in East Coast summer stock productions, worked as a fashion model and studied piano and dramatics. While hostessing at the Pepsi-Cola Pavillion at the World's Fair, a talent scout spotted her and offered her a screen test. She was hired by Walt Disney to star in a 30 minute color featurette, *It's a Small World*. Since coming to Hollywood she has worked in several television commercials and resumed her dramatic studies.

At the moment Brenda Greene appears to have everything going for her — except her name. Nobody remembers it. Actors, agents and friends have all suggested her call herself Caroline North, Carrie North or Carol Ina North — or some name suggesting her home state. Brenda has no particular preference but she is tired of hearing, "Oh honey, do something about your name. It sounds phony and too much like a dozen other names."







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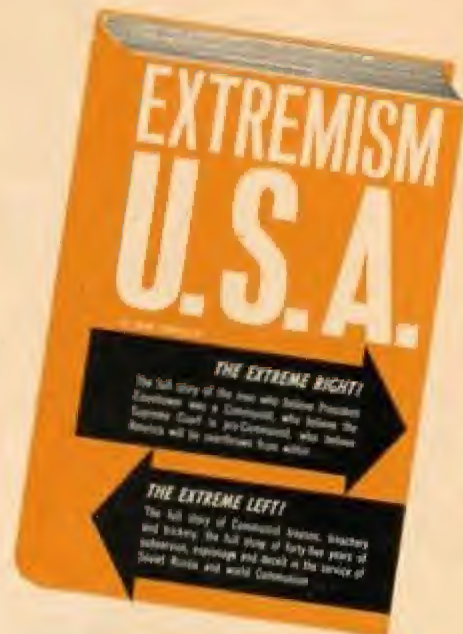
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